

Embarrassed silence. "Well, maybe they won't be checking ID," someone else suggests. Everyone is putting on their jackets and heading toward their cars. Nothing more is said, and I am faced with the choice of not going, or risking being kicked out and having to sit in a car or catch a bus home. Blech, I hate it when it's like this.

I also wonder sometimes when I will stop hearing my age repeated to me preceded by "just" or "only." Or things like "She's so together for her age!" It's tempting to take it on as a compliment, but it makes me wonder: what about young people who don't seem so "together?" Besides, I don't want to be seen as a "credit to my race" or a child prodigy; it's a long fall from that pedestal when I pass whatever age takes me out of the youth category.

You seem to think I'm special now because I don't fit your assumptions of what a young person is like. Maybe I appear more experienced, or smarter, or talk and act like a woman older than myself. Yet, appearances are not reliable. Maybe I've just learned to get by in our 25- to 40-year-old dominated community; maybe I can pass for being all "grown up."

There is no "grown up." We are not static beings. Ever. We all continue to change, to go through phases. We all have childself, motherself, who peek out intermittently through our hopes and memories. We are many ages, the sum of our experiences and much more.



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touch me.

oh grey oh white could I know your hair
could billow could sheen could steel
bunch brush blow
oh soft
of under your eyes
your wrists
pulling up gravity

iv

she wears the ages like a claw necklace
conches whales
nest in her skin the whorls of her face
speak ikons:

come
break me bare
upon the waters like a skin
upon the waters like the day
upon the waters

—Susan Leigh Star



FEMINARY

A
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SOUTH

Emphasizing the Lesbian Vision

FEMINARY, one of the oldest surviving feminist publications in the southeast, announces a shift in focus from a local feminist magazine to a lesbian feminist journal for the South.

Fathers' clocks."

I hesitate to suggest, for obvious reasons, institutionalized or institutionalizable alternatives to the clocks and calendars of the masters. Although there may be something initially appealing in the rebellion which the establishment of lesbian standard time or the women's calendar would be, such changes are little more than cosmetic surgery on the patriarchy. What is important is that we cease living (subviving would be a more honest word here) under the domination of Father Time and begin to pay attention to our own rhythms: to our body-time and to the qualitatively different durations, intensities, and temporal patterns of our relationships with each other. I believe that if we do so, we will disintegrate whole structures of adaptation to patriarchal reality (that we may not even have been aware of in ourselves). And although there is no safe place for us in their world, if we begin to decolonize our bodies and our experiences, we make a real beginning. Because we have no ground under our feet to call our own, we must create out of our own needs and desires, and what we create already is—in our shared workings of creation.

NOTES

1. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 1962.
2. Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 41, footnote.
3. Ibid., p. 390.
4. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977), pp. 1-2.
5. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), p. 54.
6. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
7. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
8. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
9. Shoshana Felman, "Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy," in: *Diacritics*, Winter (1975), p. 3.
10. Barbara Starrett, "I Dream in Female: The Metaphors of Evolution," in: *The Lesbian Reader: An Amazon Quarterly Anthology*, ed. by Gina Covina and Laurel Galana (Oakland, Calif.: Amazon Press, 1975), p. 121.



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"Now, you see these hands. These hands'll show you. See the top of my hands—the veins standing out like they're going to burst? And the little ones, too, running down to my knuckles? And the cracks, look at the hundreds of tiny cracks going this way and that and look when I turn my hands over, how dry and red and calloused. Not very pretty, are they? Not very pretty at all but they show what I've done they're my life a big blue vein for every year I've worked and a tiny little crack for every dish I've dried and every face I've wiped and if there aren't enough why I'll show you the soles of my feet. my sagging breasts, and the scar on my side and between my legs see honey see what I mean but I got more then these scars I got the love of my kids in my heart right here here where it counts and it keeps me going alright so you ought to be looking and going out dancing and you'll find you a fella and that'll be it and the kids'll start coming and that'll be it you won't have to worry you won't go crazy and end up on Hill what do they do those women on Hill?"

On the sixteenth of November I leave the apartment, move in with a friend, into another apartment with no view of Hill—I must drive to get there—and downstairs live two old women, whose hands, I've noticed in passing closely, are riddled with dark blue veins like little rivers running through them, but through the vents I hear them sometimes laughing, a lilting, spirited laughter like children in a schoolyard.

conditions: five the black women's issue

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with the rest of the poem. The child can only "try," can only attempt to communicate. The "handful" of notes suggests a tiny greedy fist; and "handful" in the sense of "only a few" suggests that the child is unable to create a melody: the "clear vowels" are not music, only separate sounds.

15. Judy Grahn, *The Work of a Common Woman*. Oakland: Diana Press, 1978, p. 76.

16. Adrienne Rich, "Pierrot Le Fou" in *The Will to Change*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1971, pp. 25-28.

17. Judy Grahn, "VII. Vera, from my childhood, The Common Woman Poems" in *Edward the Dyke and Other Poems*. Oakland: Women's Press Collective, 1970, n.p.

18. Adrienne Rich, "Splittings" in *The Dream of a Common Language*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1978, pp. 10-11.

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